

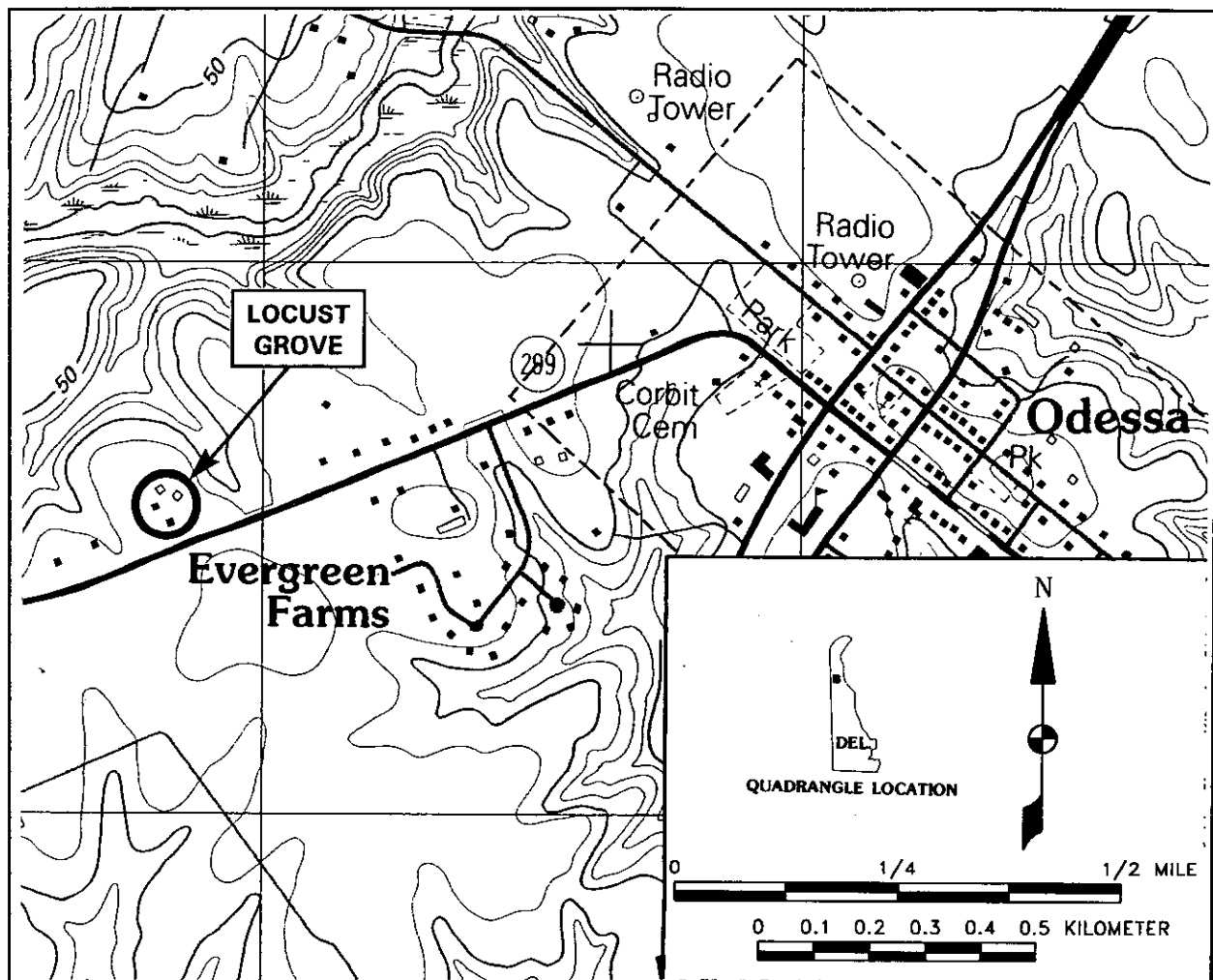
## I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the Phase III archaeological data recovery investigations at Locust Grove (Site 7NC-F-73). These investigations were sponsored by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) prior to the construction of State Route 1 (SR 1). The site, associated with a standing nineteenth-century house, is located on Middletown Road (SR 299), approximately one mile west of Odessa, in St. Georges Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware (Figure 1). The data recovery investigations were undertaken in order to examine undisturbed nineteenth-century archaeological deposits in the front and side yards of the Locust Grove property that had been identified during Phase I and Phase II testing in the proposed SR 1 corridor (Bedell et al. 1997). Phase III fieldwork, data analyses, and report preparation were carried out between November 1995 and February 1997, by Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. (LBA). The study has been conducted in accordance with the instructions and intents of Section 101(b)(4) of the National Environmental Policy Act; Sections 1(3) and 2(b) of Executive Order 11593; Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; 36 CFR 771, as amended; the guidelines developed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, published November 26, 1980; and the amended Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties, as set forth in 36 CFR 800.

SR 1 is a new limited-access highway that will carry traffic from Wilmington and I-95 around Dover to the Atlantic Ocean beaches, relieving dangerous congestion on U.S. Route 13. The proposed 50-mile-long SR 1 project corridor will also bypass the historic town of Odessa to the west. U.S. Route 13 is being relocated along portions of the corridor, and several access roads, a toll plaza, and two major interchanges (at SR 299 and County Road 420) are planned. The Locust Grove Site is located within the planned interchange area at the junction of SR 299 and SR 1. Plate 2 illustrates the site location along SR 299, just west of Odessa. The current study is part of a large program of archaeological study carried out by DelDOT and its consultants as part of the SR 1 project, the results of which have been published in the volumes of the DelDOT Archaeology Series, beginning in the mid-1980s.

Locust Grove contains a number of standing buildings, the most prominent being the house (Plate 3). The Locust Grove house, which has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the *Rebuilding St. Georges Hundred (1830-1899)* thematic nomination (Herman et al. 1985), was built in two sections. The earlier portion, which appears to date to the 1830s or 1840s (Historic American Buildings Survey 1995), is a two-story Greek Revival frame structure that faces east, perpendicular to Middletown Road. What is now the front section of the house, set at right angles to the earlier structure and oriented toward Middletown Road, is a two-and-one-half-story Second Empire-style structure built in the 1870s. Together, the two sections form an L-shaped configuration.

Outbuildings on the property include a smokehouse dating to the nineteenth century, a large machine shed, a pole barn, a poolhouse, and a small shed which may have functioned as a



**FIGURE 1: Project Location**

*Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle, Middletown, Del., 1993*

chicken coop. A swimming pool surrounded by a concrete patio is also present on the site, just to the rear of the house.

Archaeological resources at Locust Grove were first identified during the Phase I survey of the SR 1 corridor in November and December 1994. Subsequent Phase II testing conducted at Locust Grove in May 1995 identified intact buried historic features and deposits in the landscaped yard areas around the house. As a result, the site was considered to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D, since it has demonstrated the ability to yield information important to history. The Locust Grove Site was considered to be significant because the area around the house had not been plowed, and therefore portions of the property were particularly well preserved, thus providing the opportunity to examine the lifeways and material culture of an elite St. Georges Hundred farm household in the mid- to late nineteenth century.



PLATE 2: Aerial View of Site Location

Fieldwork for the data recovery program was carried out over a four-week period from November 17 through December 15, 1995, and included the excavation of 48 1x1-meter units and one 1x4-meter trench. Thirty-nine of the 48 units were grouped into two large block excavations, designated the East Block and the West Block. The West Block, located in the western side yard of the Locust Grove house, consisted of 13 test units. The East Block, located in the front yard of the Locust Grove house, included 26 test units and the 1x4-meter trench (Trench 1). Nine additional units were excavated outside of the blocks to completely investigate front yard deposits.

The research findings from this study largely focus on the historic occupation of the Locust Grove property beginning in the early nineteenth century, and concentrate on historic landscape change and consumer behavior and how these two aspects of material culture reflected and reinforced social/class identity in rural Delaware. The issue of prehistoric settlement at the site is also examined, due primarily to the identification of a pit feature similar in form to others in Delaware that have been attributed variously to human action (Native American construction of pit houses) or natural causes (treefalls).

The majority of the archaeological deposits uncovered in the front and side yards are the result of landscaping activities that occurred over the last quarter of the nineteenth century, both during and after the construction of the Second Empire section of Locust Grove. Several shallow pit





PLATE 3: Locust Grove, 1995

features were also encountered, and a number of these also appear to be nineteenth-century landscaping deposits. In addition, excavation uncovered a mid-nineteenth-century surface in the East Block beneath a layer of rubble fill. This deposit consisted of a thin layer of soil containing a dense concentration of household refuse, including a number of mendable glass and ceramic vessels.

As noted above, one possible prehistoric feature was encountered at the Locust Grove Site. Although a few prehistoric artifacts were recovered during the excavations, none were found in association with the pit feature.

The remainder of this report is organized into nine chapters, plus six appendices. Chapter II contains a description of the site's environmental setting, while Chapter III provides a summary of the Phase I and Phase II investigations conducted at Locust Grove. Chapter IV outlines the research design which guided the data recovery investigations, including a discussion of the research issues pertinent to the site, and a summary of the research methods. Overviews of the regional prehistoric and historic contexts, and the results of the site-specific historical research conducted for the project, are presented in Chapter V. Chapter VI deals with the results of Phase III fieldwork; Chapter VII presents the analytical results and discusses the findings in relation to

the research issues identified for the project. A summary of the project and the conclusions are presented in Chapter VIII. Chapter IX contains the bibliography.

The artifact collections from the site are currently in storage at LBA's archaeology laboratory in East Orange, New Jersey. Original field records, photographs, and other material related to the site have also been prepared for storage with the collection. The artifact collections and associated materials have been prepared for permanent storage in Delaware.